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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KAMPALA 000589

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SUBJECT: NORTHERN UGANDA NOTES (March 23-April 6, 2007)

¶1. (U) Summary: Post presents the seventeenth edition of Northern Uganda Notes to provide information on the situation on the ground and USG activities aimed at meeting Mission's objectives in northern Uganda. These objectives include promoting regional stability through peace and security, good governance, access to social services, economic growth, and humanitarian assistance. Post appreciates feedback from consumers on the utility of this product and any gaps in information that need to be filled. End Summary.

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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROCESSES
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¶2. (SBU) Uganda's Minister for Internal Affairs Ruhakana Rugunda announced that the peace talks would resume in Juba on April 13. A GOU team, which will include parliamentarians and local officials from northern Uganda, plans to travel to Rikwangba to meet with Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti on April 11-12, presumably in advance of the resumption of the talks. Given previous logistical delays, we anticipate the GOU-Kony meeting and the resumption date will slip. The composition of the GOU's delegation for the upcoming round of talks has changed. Two members, the Director of the Internal Security Organization and the Chief of Military Intelligence have been withdrawn. Christine Aporu from the Amnesty Commission and Major Felix Kulayigye, the Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces Spokesman, will join the team. Discussion on the Juba Initiative Fund continues, with donors deciding on the amount of allowance to be paid, in addition to satellite telephone air-time, for the LRA delegation.

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SECURITY UPDATE
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¶3. (U) Twelve High Court judges have been working to clear over 500 backlogged cases in Gulu, Lira, Kitgum, Pader, Soroti, and Kumi Districts. Four judges are handling 170 cases in Gulu and one judge will hear 15 cases in Lira. According to the Principal Judge, James Ogoola, sixty percent of the cases are for defilement of minor girls and forty percent are murder. During the sessions in Gulu, six individuals, including an LRA collaborator, were sentenced to death in murder cases, some for crimes committed as far back as 2001.

¶4. (SBU) The behavior of local defense units (LDUs) in Lira is a growing concern. The LDUs are locally recruited militias that are used to provide security throughout the north. They are under the command of the UPDF, but are administratively (including for pay purposes) the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The LDUs are reportedly responsible for numerous human rights abuses

and are vulnerable to misuse by local politicians. In Lira, one of the militias held a district-level Mdecins Sans Frontiers staffer while he was beaten, allegedly on the orders of a local leader. Special Police Constables are being deployed, but receive little support and have been seen setting up inappropriate roadblocks in Amuru District. The incidents highlight the need for the deployment of well-trained and supplied police to replace the military and IDUs in northern Uganda.

15. (U) USG Activities: A U.S. Department of Justice team visited Uganda from March 26-31 to discuss an upcoming community policing program for northern Uganda. The team traveled to Lira District and met with the Deputy Inspector General of Police, who is coordinating the deployment of police in northern Uganda, and other police officials. In Kampala, the team met with the Inspector General of Police, Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, the Justice, Law, and Order Secretariat (JLOS), and donors. The DOJ team concluded that the new pilot activity should aim at achieving an integrated administration of justice that would involve community policing, prosecution, community courts, and possibly corrections. USAID/DOJ support would provide training and technical assistance for a holistic, "chain-linking" approach to justice within the JLOS framework and in conjunction with other Ugandan government and development partner initiatives for recruitment of personnel and provision of facilities, transport, and communications for the police.

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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY
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16. (U) The Northern Uganda Advisor reported that in Lira District, over 250,000 internally-displaced persons have returned voluntarily to their home areas. It is estimated that 96,702 IDPs remain in 13

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camps. The District Management Committee is de-gazetting camps. Many of the camps were trading centers, which means that IDPs are being encouraged to destroy their huts and fill latrines as they depart. UNHCR notes that the process has been uneven, with some NGOs providing incentives, such as soap, to those IDPs that properly clean up their areas as they depart. Some land owners are beginning to pressure the IDPs to move out of the camps and off their land.

17. (SBU) In Gulu District, UNHCR reports that approximately 4,400 IDPs returned directly to their homes. The majority of IDPs are moving to land access sites. Over the past two months, the movement out of the camps has slowed due to fears about the peace process, rumors of LRA sightings in Sudan, and lack of services in the return areas. Lack of consistent messages from local officials in Kitgum remains a problem.

18. (SBU) There has been only limited IDP reaction to the cuts in World Food Program (WFP) rations, and the cut in resettlement distributions from three months to one month. The Northern Uganda Advisor reports that the primary concern is to avoid an abrupt cut-off in distributions.

19. (U) At the Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC) meeting on March 30, Minister of State for Relief and Disaster Preparedness Musa Ecweru announced that the Government would assess the performance of non-governmental organizations in northern Uganda and suspend the operational licenses of those that were not performing tasks related to their stated objectives. Ecweru alleged that few of the registered 600 NGOs would have their licenses renewed because "they have moved away from their original work objectives, with no work done on the ground." Ecweru complained that NGO employees were staying at "expensive hotels at the expense of the suffering people" and that they could be found "swimming and boozing, ignoring work; yet at the end of the day, they claim money from the donors." He stated that the Government would not accept the NGOs playing with donor funds. World Vision, Save the Children, and the International Committee of the Red Cross were praised for their activities. Comment: The immediate target of the Government's assessment appears to be NGOs that exist on paper and are not providing needed services, not larger organizations with international affiliations.

Nonetheless, Mission personnel will keep in close contact with our NGO partners as the assessment proceeds.

¶10. (U) USG Activities: The HELP Commission (Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People Around the Globe) Commission, a bipartisan commission appointed by Congress and the President, chaired by Mary ¶K. Bush, visited Uganda from March 26 - 28. In Uganda, the team members traveled from the eastern border with Kenya to Kampala and then up to Lira in northern Uganda. The Commission visited USAID, CDC, and CJTF-HOA project sites, discussed the MCC Threshold Country Program with the Ministry of Finance, met Parliamentarians and examined the impact of numerous Presidential initiatives in Uganda implemented through local (including faith-based organizations), as well as US implementing partners.

¶11. (U) WFP has 600 acres of improved cassava ready for distribution through a USAID/OFDA-funded project.

¶12. (U) A USAID/EGAT team working with the National Water and Sewage Corporation (NWSC) visited the Gulu municipal reservoir and treatment plant, motorized boreholes, and hand pumps in IDP camps in the north.

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FROM THE MEDIA AND THE WEB
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¶13. (U) The work of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was highlighted in the major daily newspapers over the past week. On April 3, the Daily Monitor featured a photograph of CJTF-HOA personnel performing a water quality test at one of the repaired boreholes in Pader District. CJTF-HOA plans to repair 50 more boreholes in northern Lira and southern Pader districts. Resident District Commissioner for Pader, Santos Okot Lapolo, while praising the work of the CJTF-HOA team, requested continued support, and not to be left "in the middle of the road." The article also noted that the team gave out clothes and shoes to patients at the Awere Health Centre and that the team's mission was humanitarian in nature.
BROWNING